



OYAMA BONSAI KAI

Club Newsletter - November 2010

President's Report

What an exciting meeting that last meeting was and I knew we were in for fun when Len said this was something he had never tried before. He, creatively, had prepared little bags made of mosquito netting to keep the muck and the roots together so that they wouldn't be washed off the rock. He gave a brief introduction as to what he intended to do, summoned his assistants and they began working. While they were working Freddy present an excellent and informative talk on "Root over rock, Root on rock", explaining the meaning of the different styles, giving us the Japanese names and showing us the exciting examples. This was a world class meeting and the demonstration by Len will be written up into an article and posted on the website. Some of the pictures will be uploaded to Facebook and will also be shown at the January 2011 meeting.



The Stone Lantern book order has arrived. Kimura's book was a snip at \$9.99 and the total cost including postage, customs etc was only R83, really good value indeed. The library now has some magnificent books as well.

Geoff



Acer kyohime Defoliation by Jacques Graulus

Len's What to do Monthly

I am starting finally to believe that the longer a tree is in a pot the better it grows, up to a point when it becomes root bound. So I am thinking that your tree will benefit from being disturbed only when necessary, just like humans. Through one reason or another I did only emergency potting last year and this year I am seeing the benefit of trees that were not potted now being in a pot for 3 or 4 years and they are growing well. When you look at trees in Bonsai Today that are being re-potted you see masses of roots, really dense mats of roots and I always wondered what are we doing wrong that we are not achieving masses of roots like that, now I know, we pot too quickly. One other thing I have noticed is that when some growers winter prune, not enough is pruned back and consequently when new growth starts it is just replacing what was pruned off. Trees should be pruned hard anticipating what will grow again. When you are pruning for shape and not for ramification, there is a great deal of difference.

It's been a cool start to the year, not in the hippy verbal way, but it has been cold. Some of my trees are not looking at putting out new leaves yet, one of these is Schotia, and I was a little worried until Freddy came around and told me his Schotia was acting just the same. Relief. One of the things our hobby is not, is boring. Every year, every season is different and the trees react differently. Last year our trees were doing so well at this time due to the amount of rain there was, but this year we are a lot

drier and are still waiting for really good rains. The weather report tonight forecast some rain ahead and I hope it is a good rainy spell.

At this time of year it is especially important not to let trees dry out and this means you have to be vigilant as to your trees needs. A Bonsai can dry out pretty quickly especially if there is a breeze blowing. Also the more foliage the tree has the less water the tree's roots receive so it's important to check the growing medium and not rely on saying "well it rained heavy so the tree must be wet," CHECK CHECK when watering. One way of conserving moisture is to mulch your pots with compost. This has the added benefit of leaching goodness from the compost into your mix as you water. Ideally watering deciduous Bonsai at this time of the year needs to be done very carefully so as to keep the leaf size smaller. Of course this only matters if your tree has reached show stage, if you are still developing your tree and your growing medium is correct you can pour the water on and no problems will occur, once the leaf has hardened off cell walls become less plastic and water can be provided abundantly as the weather temperature increases. After repotting your Bonsai, it needs less water so don't flood the trees in this state.

When you start pruning be aware of the process of growing a Bonsai, know there is a difference between a Bonsai and a tree in development. With development trees let the bottom branches run and keep the top pruned back. Established Bonsai need pruning constantly and is something which should not be allowed to get out of hand, you must prune constantly at this time as the vigorous growth can spoil many an established Bonsai with long internodal distances being created. (Internodal distance is the gap between growth points on a primary branch) especially with Maples.

Trees that have been slow to produce new growth can still be potted and as mentioned there are still one or two I am waiting for to pop new growth. I normally pot Junipers at this time when the weather is getting a little warmer(hopefully) One point I cannot emphasize enough is do not pot trees that are not showing signs of good strong growth. The obvious exception being Swamp Cypress. Figs still need to be done as the weather gets hotter. I normally pot my Figs during the Xmas break. Wire can quickly make a mess of trunks and branches at this time of year if left on a fraction to long, and I would err on the side of caution and remove wire that has been left on for a while. One little tip about wiring if you have a number of trees is to tie a piece of red wool around any trees branches that have been wired and that will remind you that there is wire still on that tree. It is very easy to miss a wired tree after a few months. Of course some trees do look good with a little bit of wire bite and it can improve the appearance as well as cause thickening. This technique of letting the wire bite is being practiced on certain species such as Acacia

and Pines.

Reposition your trees as the weather gets hotter and place your trees accordingly, Olives in full sun, Maples in semi shade, you get the idea. Most trees though will benefit from being in the shade from 12.00 to 15.00hrs. If you are in doubt speak to me. Get into your fertilizing program with a high nitrogen fertilizer. I like the Neutrog range as I only apply every 8 weeks along with micro nutrients twice a year. Remember that Neutrog has a high nitrogen fertilizer called High Riser which is for spring growth and their normal one for general fertilizing. Do not fertilize newly potted trees; wait at least 4-6 weeks. Two fertilizers I have started using after being advised by a nurseryman Eds Garden Health Magic Planting a 7-7-7 (21) granular fertilizer and specifically for root growth. The other product is a fertilizer from Talbourne Organics and is a 3-1-5 (18) both these products come highly recommended from an experienced nurseryman. Beware the Talbourne range is very expensive, hopefully it's because it is so good.

With the increase in temperature comes an increase in bugs and diseases. I have already given my Olives a treatment of Ridamil at this time to prevent Phytophra (root rot) I also treat in autumn for the winter period. Watch out for spots on Olives which is usually a sign of Aphids or Leaf Hopper. Once the leaf has been disfigured the only treatment is to remove the leaf. Snails, the bane of our lives, are still rampant. You can greatly reduce them if you take the trouble to one evening when it's raining or at least damp go out amongst your collection with a torch and pick them off as they start to forage for new growth. Another bug which is becoming a nuisance in my garden is Snout Beetle, it comes from a creeper which is coming over the wall from my neighbor, this little guy can do an amazing amount of damage in a night, and I have started using an insecticide granule from Efecta in an effort to wipe him out. I know many people disagree but a regular spray program once a month with a cocktail of Malathion, Metasystox and Seagrow can keep your collection under control pest wise. Watch your Junipers for signs of grayness which indicates mites, these can kill your Junipers quite quickly. To control this bug use Karbaspray. If you find a bug on your trees and you are not sure what it is put the infected leaf and the actual bug in a bottle and take it to Starke Ayres, who have a very helpful staff and will advise you what it is and what to use to control it. Alternatively there is a very good soft back book called The Garden Guardians by Johan Gerber which is a local publication that lists practically all pests and diseases prevalent in South Africa. A good buy at R174.00

Now is the time to start preparing your tree for our Easter Show. Go through your collection and highlight your quality Bonsai. Separate these trees and then go through them and make notes and plans to improve any faults you spot. It may only be

a branch that needs wiring to improve a tree but if you do nothing else keep your hand on your established show trees by nipping throughout the year, it's difficult to reestablish your Bonsai if it gets out of shape. We aim to have a Bonsai to exhibit at the show from every member, no matter if you have been in the club for only a few months, I think it would set some kind of record for the Guinness book of records, let's make that our aim this year even if you are not here you could leave your tree with a member.

Last year I wrote "that I blushed to write this but don't let your weeds get out of hand. Sorry to say that it's the same this year and when I look at Freddy's and Hennie's collections I really blush It's a case of do what I say not what I do, I remember the saying "one year's seeding seven years weeding." This year I can say my weeds are a lot less only because I had a visit from a Bonsai grower who I respect and I wanted to impress. It's amazing what vanity will make a person do!
Two quotes which have always meant a lot to me are:

It is more important to understand the individuality of the Bonsai and enhance its features, than to follow rules.

There is also beauty in imperfection.

Len

Comms Corner

Well, I must start by apologising for the lateness of this month's newsletter. I do have an excuse though as today it comes to you from a rather cloudy Sao Jose Dos Campos in Brazil. The trees here are something else! Needless to say, here it is all the same.

It is a rather quiet month for me this month, and I must just mention the end of year party. The details are in the Club Calendar section. This year we will be having the traditional Spit Braai, so it should be good. Please make the effort to be there as a club that plays together stays together! PLEASE RSVP to Debbie at debbies@telkomsa.net or to another committee member.

I will include full EXCO contact details in the next newsletter.

Regards,

Andrew

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Bonsai Ramblings

This month's Bonsai Ramblings come to you compliments of Hennie Nel. Hennie has just been to China for a bonsai dedicated tour with Bonsai Clubs International. Enough from me - over to Hennie!

BCI Tour of China 2010

I heard about the tour by total co-incidence, and certainly would have been very much poorer in experience had I not gone.

Bonsai Clubs International arranged the tour covering Guangzhou Province, Nanjing and finally Beijing. The tour focused on showing us Penjing (Bonsai) as they call it in China, Stones and Ceramics. We also however had the opportunity to take in other tourist attractions like the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, and many more. The hospitality of the Chinese was really great and the organisation was superb, accepting that we were about 140 in the group representing 19 countries, and constantly on the move.

We went to various Bonsai exhibitions and were hosted at two private collections over the two week period. The one host gave us a coffee table book of his collection. The Bonsai in general was really outstanding with the quantum, size and freedom of expression within the trees a characteristic that we can well learn from, and maybe enjoy the more artistic side of Bonsai, without throwing the 'conventional wisdom' out the window.

The first exhibition was a real eye opener as the hall was very large, spaciouly exhibiting over 200 trees. The trees at the entrance were easily the biggest I have ever seen, and very 'unconventional'. It was not unusual to have trees at over a meter and the trunks were seriously thick. Many of the trees were without foliage allowing one to see the concentrated ramification of the branches and beautiful trunk lines. The seize of the trees certainly created a lot of debate with the more Western countries, Australia, USA and South Africa thinking it was pushing the envelope, while the Asian delegates were far more accepting of it.

There were also some trees that according to me were more 'artistic' than following any of my 'conventional' Bonsai principles, but totally mind boggling. (Photo is on next page)



One particular tree had two apex's, which caused some serious pattern changing, and when I discussed this with Buddy Sulisty, he suggested I enjoy the tree, and that he can comfortably live with



it. The pine trees in general, and specifically the black pine and the five needled pine were really outstanding and one could find them in virtually every style. Cascades and literati's were plentiful.



I was also introduced to the Yangzhou Style at the Yangzhou Penjing Museum, where the top is flat and the branches have 3 turns per inch. We watched a young master work on the tree, "wiring" with raffia! Very different, but I could enjoy!



I have not mentioned the stone museums where the stones are "mountainous" and the ceramic factories, where there are warehouses full of the most magnificent pots.

I found this quote at the Penjing Museum with which I will conclude:

Penjing is one of the excellent Chinese traditional arts. By making use of the plants, rock, clay and water, natural beauties can be created in the pots through artistic conception and gardening cultivation. It can achieve the artistic result of shrinking a dragon into an inch in size in order to see the big through the small, looking like (three) dimensional landscape portraits.

Hennie Nel

Club Calendar

10th November (a bit late - sorry!)

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| President's Report | Geoff |
| Open Forum | Geoff |
| Tree Critique | Vicky |
| Design Options | Viky |

Main Theme
Defoliation
Hennie, Thys, Carl, Phil & Freddie

Beginner's Corner
Wiring Techniques + Practical

Club Year-end Party

Venue: Gavin Fish's Bonsai En in Noordhoek
(directions to follow)

Date: 4th Dec

Cost: R 85 all in - this includes salads, garlic rolls and as much lamb as you can eat.